

South Carolina Teen LEAD Project

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1. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

Approximately 28% of tenth graders in South Carolina do not pass the statewide exit exam. South Carolina's average composite score on the ACT remains below the national average. While South Carolina's scores on the SAT have improved at a rate beyond the national average (increasing 27 points in the past five years), a gap of 35 points remains between the state's average score in 2005 and the nation's average.

South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Act (2005) requires local school board to establish character education programs, and these programs must "incorporate character traits including, but not limited to, the following: respect for authority and respect for others, honesty, self-control, cleanliness, courtesy, good manners, cooperation, citizenship, patriotism, courage, fairness, kindness, self-respect, compassion, diligence, good work ethics, sound educational habits, generosity, punctuality, cheerfulness, patience, sportsmanship, loyalty, and virtue." These qualities readily translate from school to work to community.

South Carolina's Project Teen LEAD is designed to better prepare students for productive lives as citizens, employees, parents, and leaders. Many of our students will enter the workforce immediately after high school graduation, and Teen LEAD will help provide these young employees with the leadership and work skills and character assets they need to succeed.

The Goals of Teen LEAD are as follows:

Goal 1: To develop groups of student leaders (character cadres) who as members of the project's partnership will direct character development initiatives in their schools and communities that will be integrated into classroom instruction, are consistent with state academic content standards, and can be conducted in conjunction with other education reform efforts.

Goal 2: To provide technical assistance and financial support to character cadres in

developing, implementing, and evaluating their programs so that their school-based initiatives follow best practice guidelines, use research-based programs, and have a diverse base of support.

Goal 3: To implement an evaluation plan consistent with Government Performance and Results Act requirements and the invitational priority for rigorous, scientifically based research that will inform project improvement and contribute to current knowledge about youth-led initiatives.

Strategies to Ensure Equal Access

South Carolina's Teen Leaders Evolving and Developing (Teen LEAD) project will conform to our legislative requirements and best practice standards. The state's enabling legislation for character education requires that each district have a character education policy that incorporates core character traits and includes all sectors of the community, including parents and youth, in developing policy and programs.

Best practices dictate that character initiatives be fully integrated and inclusive (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999). Therefore, our strategy is to involve all students, including those with disabilities, during program planning. These students will be the agents and the beneficiaries of their school's character development initiatives. Further, we will meet with parents of children nominated to participate in leadership training, explain the initiative to them, and seek their input through membership on school advisory teams and as part of the evaluation process. Our legislation and standards assure equal access and treatment for this initiative.

The selection criteria specifically target a nontraditional group of students for leadership training. The students targeted to participate in Teen LEAD training will be rising 10th graders who meet the three primary criteria

1. Scoring at "basic" or "below basic" proficiency on PACT (an indicator of

achievement on the HSAP, SAT, and ACT)

2. Unlikely to pursue postsecondary education
3. Displaying untapped leadership potential.

Over the project period, 70 high schools will send six-student teams to Teen LEAD training: 10 teams during the first summer and 20 teams in each of the subsequent three summers. The seven partner districts —Berkeley County School District, Clarendon County School District 2, Greenville County School District, Laurens County School District 55, Lexington County School District 1, Marlboro County School District, and Orangeburg County School District 5—will be responsible for sending the first groups of teams. These districts reflect a range of student and community characteristics and are representative of those districts that serve communities with extreme economic hardships, high percentages of minority populations, and that have student populations with high rates of basic and below basic proficiency on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test, the statewide assessment that is administered annually in grades 3–8.

The partner districts represent South Carolina’s student, school, and community characteristics: from small, rural districts (characterized by high levels of poverty and predominately minority populations) to one of the largest county-wide districts in the state.

Table 2 provides a quick profile of the partner districts.

Table 2. Characteristics of Partner Districts

| District | Enrollment | High Schools | African American | Subsidized Meals | Drop-out | Graduation Rate |
|-------------|------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Berkeley | 26,544 | 6 | 35% | 52% | 5.9% | 73.6% |
| Clarendon 2 | 3,287 | 1 | 67% | 77% | 2.9% | 77.3% |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------|----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Greenville | 63,242 | 14 | 27% | 39% | 2.6% | 79.3% |
| Laurens 55 | 5,710 | 1 | 35% | 62% | 3.9% | 68.8% |
| Lexington 1 | 18,734 | 4 | 7% | 31% | 2.4% | 87.2% |
| Marlboro | 4,843 | 1 | 62% | 80% | 5.8% | 63.1% |
| Orangeburg 5 | 6,970 | 3 | 90% | 84% | 2.8% | 81.2% |

Individual graduation plans, developed for all secondary students as part of a reform mandated by South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) of 2005, will help us identify the pool of students who are likely to enter the workforce immediately after high school completion. School personnel will identify natural leaders within the target population, and participants will be selected from a pool of nominees that meet the three primary criteria and also represent their student bodies. In addition, we will urge school personnel responsible for nominating potential participants to include disabled (mentally and physically) students and equal proportions of male and female students. One exception to the random assignment is that students with disabilities will be given a priority to ensure their representation on the teams and will be accommodated as needed to facilitate their participation in the evaluation.

The primary site for the summer training events, Clemson University's Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) located in Pickens, South Carolina, is handicapped accessible. The dormitory facilities house males and females separately; therefore, requiring equal proportions of male and female students on teams will help us maximize the number of participants who can participate.

Quality, Intensity, and Duration of Training and Professional Development

Modeled after our state's successful Teen Institute for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention (TI), Teen LEAD will launch a two-week, residential summer training program for

six-student teams, each accompanied by a faculty or staff sponsor (cadre coach). The training program, which will be fully evaluated, will be designed to teach students about character education and program planning and development, to develop their leadership skills, and to enhance the character traits and job skills needed for success in the workplace.

The Teen LEAD curriculum will include a six-day parallel track for the cadre coaches. Team-building activities, time to begin planning for the school year, and some of the instructional segments will be shared components for both the student and coach tracks. Separate sessions for the coaches will teach strategies to develop each youth's potential and how to empower the team members to serve as leaders for character education. The coaches will not be required to stay for the second week during which time the program will focus on teaching students workplace-related character components.

The YLI will develop the Teen LEAD curriculum. The curriculum will be mapped to South Carolina's curriculum standards and will become a public domain product that can be segmented for implementation during classroom periods or during weekend events (should broader application of the curriculum be warranted).

Following the training, the teams will return to their schools to develop cadres of students (character cadres) and plan and implement character development activities and programs—ranging from educational presentations and community events to service-learning projects and more comprehensive programs such as peer mediation and cross-age mentoring/tutoring. Cadre members also will serve on character development advisory teams, created as part of this initiative, or join pre-existing groups in their schools dedicated to building character.

Teen LEAD's focus on building character and job skills makes this initiative coordinate well with EEDA's reform measures. A logical link exists because EEDA amended the core

values in the character education enabling legislation to include “respect for authority,” “good work ethics,” and sound educational habits,” and it was designed to better prepare students for postsecondary education and productive careers.

An additional component of the collaborative infrastructure supporting Teen LEAD is the South Carolina Professional Development Teachers Academy. The Academy is a graduate course hosted each summer by three South Carolina institutions of higher education with Boston University’s Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC). The Teachers Academy provides instruction in the history and philosophy of moral development and prepare teachers to foster their students’ character development by integrating character lessons with the curriculum and by responding in an intentional manner when teachable moments arise.

Because the SDE underwrites the cost of the Teachers Academy, the approximately 100 teachers and administrators who participate each summer are required as part of their coursework to design and implement curriculum units and share the knowledge gained with their colleagues. Stipends will be offered to faculty, counselors, and administrators in the districts to encourage enrollment in the Academy so that Teen LEAD can continue to boost the capacity of our schools to address the character development of students.

We also will implement annual statewide conferences to share the successes of Teen LEAD and increase collaboration among businesses, communities, schools, and youth. Teen LEAD participants will present at the conferences that will also serve as venues for annual reunions of this group of youth.

Collaboration of Appropriate Partners

Extensive and ongoing collaboration provides a strong infrastructure for Teen LEAD. The South Carolina Character Development Partnership (SCCDP), a long-standing group of

educators and community representatives who have guided the character education initiative in South Carolina for the past ten years, constructed the foundation for Teen LEAD. SCDDP's mission is to promote comprehensive character development in South Carolina by advancing knowledge, encouraging partnerships, and creating opportunities for professional development. While much has been done to accomplish this mission, including the addition of a character development grade on the annual school report cards, four separate statewide surveys of school administrators revealed areas for improvement. An item on the survey consistently revealed that students comprise the group least likely to be involved in the planning of character education programs (Blume, Welch, & Paget, 2004). Thus, the SCCDP prioritized youth leadership as an area of focus and engaged Clemson University's highly respected YLI as the venue for training and development.

Over 21,000 young people participate annually in 50 youth leadership, education, and development programs conducted by the YLI, making the Institute an excellent partner to develop the curriculum, recruit and train staff, and host Teen LEAD. In addition, their philosophy of active youth leadership and student-led programming parallels that of Teen LEAD. Their programs, which operate year-round and employ more than 170 staff members, include numerous special interest sessions, weekend leadership conferences, and academic programs. The success of these and other programs has led many agencies and organizations to form partnerships with the Institute, including the South Carolina Department of Social Services, the Coalition for Natural Resource Education, the American Diabetic Association, the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice, the South Carolina Department of Public Safety, and the Santee Cooper Authority. Thus, the YLI is experienced in and committed to collaborative relationships designed to make a difference in children's lives.

Each of the seven partner districts brings existing local collaborations to Teen LEAD. Orangeburg School District Five and Clarendon School District Two contain community of character initiatives with active partnerships among local government, the business community, and schools. The JROTC program in Marlboro School District has a history of service in support of social justice programs, and service learning in Lexington School District One raised funds to replace a fire engine for a New York City Fire Station after 9-11.

2. QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

Employment from Persons who are Traditionally Underrepresented

The South Carolina Department of Education (SDE) and South Carolina Character Development Partnership (SCCDP) will do its best to ensure that all people associated with the character education project represent the state's racial and ethnic diversity. The project director will ensure a highly qualified staff (both educational background and experience) that reflects overall diversity among the pool of candidates. Position announcements (see job descriptions in Appendix A) will specify that applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the barriers facing the targeted student populations. The SCCDP will collaborate with representatives from school, community, and government entities and will ensure that nondiscrimination practices and information exchanges are monitored. To attract applications from those persons who are traditionally underrepresented, the partner districts and the SDE will advertise positions in professional minority journals.

Qualifications of Project Personnel

As the **Project Director (PD)**, Joan Dickinson, SDE's Character Education Coordinator, will commit 25% of her time to the project. She has seven years' experience in public school guidance, collaboration with community and agency partners, and direct counseling with

students and families from disadvantaged backgrounds. Her research experience and training in vocational rehabilitation counseling gives her understanding of processes of evaluation, workplace ethics, accountability, and sustainability in grant coordination. She has provided character education professional development training and technical assistance to local school districts. Ms. Dickinson will assume fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant and will administer and supervise the distribution of funds to the districts, negotiate contractual services with the independent evaluators, and coordinate required reports. (All resumes are in Appendix A.)

A **Teen LEAD Coordinator** will be hired to work full time on Teen LEAD. The Coordinator will assist the Project Director to implement the project: conducting site-based training, supervising district program coordinators, and monitoring Teen LEAD activities. The Teen LEAD Coordinator will have sufficient education and credentials in character education, workplace ethics, and/or secondary education.

We will also hire a full-time **Teen LEAD Program Assistant** to work on the project. This individual will provide technical assistance and support to the partner districts and schools as well as community stakeholders in developing and implementing youth led character development initiatives. In addition, the Program Assistant will communicate with school districts regarding reporting requirements, assist in preparation of training materials, and assist with maintenance of financial records.

As **Curriculum Developer**, Pam Ardern, will develop the Teen LEAD summer training curricula for students and faculty sponsors. With 14 years' experience as Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute's (YLI) Director of Curriculum Development, Dr. Ardern's expertise in experiential and adventure-based programs, at-risk youth, and curriculum integration of

divergent learning styles highlight her ability to develop a highly interactive leadership in character curriculum. With full backing from Clemson, the YLI will provide facilities, staff, and curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged and disabled students.

Kathleen Paget and Cathy Blume, the University of South Carolina (USC), will be the **Independent Evaluators**. Dr. Paget (Ph.D. in School Psychology), director of the research and evaluation division at USC's Center for Child and Family Studies in the College of Social Work, oversees the conceptualization and implementation of research studies and program evaluations in education, health, and human services. In addition to extensive experience with at-risk and emotionally disturbed students, Dr. Paget has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in disadvantaged and underrepresented children and their families and has managed several school-based evaluations, including a statewide initiative in character education, a large urban school district's Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, and a violence-prevention initiative in five middle schools. Dr. Paget brings skills in research design to this project from her management of an experimentally designed, statewide teen pregnancy prevention program evaluation as well as research in 16 high schools that served as comparison sites for a collaborative effort with the Injury Prevention Research Center at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Cathy Blume, M.Ed. in educational research, is a research assistant professor at The Center for Child and Family Studies and has extensive expertise in the areas of character education, alcohol and other drug abuse prevention, family preservation and support, child welfare, interagency collaboration, database applications, and management information systems. Ms. Blume is known statewide for her technical expertise and has garnered respect from school personnel through her evaluations in character education, school-based mental health, and Safe Schools/Healthy Students. Cathy has evaluated South Carolina's Teen Institute for alcohol and

other drug abuse prevention and managed a mini-grants program for a youth empowerment initiative. She will use her expertise in creating automated databases for school and other agency personnel to ensure a timely and accurate data collection process for this project.

3. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

Methods of Evaluation

Teen LEAD's evaluation plan meets the GPRA requirement that Partnership in Character Education Program (PCEP) grantees demonstrate predicted student effects through valid, rigorous evaluations, and the PCEP invitational priority for experimental and quasi-experimental designs. In response to the invitational priority, we are eager to share our work with the U.S. Department of Education and benefit from the technical assistance it provides.

Target Population and Sampling. The seven partner districts have agreed to provide the requisite number of school teams for first-year implementation and work within this evaluation design (letters of support can be found in the appendix). After Year One, Teen LEAD training will be open to all high schools not already involved in the project. Subsequent years' participants will not be required to participate in the project evaluation, but they will have access to the evaluation protocols and instruments. The schools participating in the first Teen LEAD training and their control/comparison sites will be evaluation subjects for the project duration.

Within multi- high school districts, schools will be randomly assigned to either send a team to Teen LEAD training (intervention group) or serve as controls. For participating districts with only one high school, comparison rather than control schools will be identified from other districts with similar demographic compositions. In all intervention group schools, students meeting the Teen LEAD selection criteria will be randomly assigned to the intervention or control group. One exception to the random assignment is that students with disabilities will be

given a priority to ensure their representation on the teams and will be accommodated as needed to facilitate their participation in the evaluation. Schools serving as control/comparison sites will be eligible to send teams to training during the final summer of the project as participation at that time will not impact the project evaluation.

Methods and Instrumentation. There are two sets of outcomes for Teen LEAD. The first set (Level 1 outcomes) focuses on the direct recipients of Teen LEAD training: the student teams (the founding members of the Character Cadres) and their adult sponsors (Cadre Coaches). The second set (Level 2 outcomes) focuses on those groups and entities to be impacted by the actions of the Character Cadres and Cadre Coaches: students, school personnel, and parents. Multiple methods with multiple sources will be used for the evaluation. Such “triangulation” in data collection strengthens evaluation findings by incorporating multiple perspectives, neutralizing bias, and acting as a validity check (Posey, Davidson, and Korpi, 2002).

Two questionnaires with an abundance of validity and reliability data will be used in the evaluation: the *Eleven Principles Survey of Character Education Effectiveness* (EPS) developed by Thomas Lickona and the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth* (VIA-Youth) developed by Nansook Park and Christopher Peterson. The EPS, particularly useful as a needs assessment instrument, is valuable in prompting discussion based on the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education in relation to the developmental status of an initiative. The EPS will be administered to school personnel, including Cadre Coaches, and to members of the school character development advisory teams. The VIA-Youth, designed to assess components of good character among middle and high school students, was normed with high school youth, and includes many relevant subscales such as leadership, teamwork, and perseverance (Park, Nansook, & Peterson, 2005).

Another instrument that will contribute to the evaluation is our character development rubric. The SCCDP and the project directors developed this rubric in response to a request from the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce to add a grade for character education to the annual school report card (see Appendix D). The rubric assesses five dimensions of character development: schoolwide character integration; schoolwide planning; schoolwide professional development; assessment and evaluation; and school-community partnership. A copy of the rubric, which was validated in separate studies conducted by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (2003) and by the evaluators (Paget and Blume, 2005).

The evaluators will conduct literature searches to locate other needed instruments and will develop and validate questionnaires tailored to our specific objectives as necessary. For example, a questionnaire is needed to assess student character traits related to workplace success that can be completed by Cadre Coaches and parents. In addition, the evaluators will construct three versions of a Teen LEAD questionnaire—for Character Cadres, Cadre Coaches, and other school personnel—to assess each group’s unique perspective of their school’s initiative. The evaluation questions and methods are summarized in **Table 3** below.

Table 3. Evaluation Questions and Methods for Teen LEAD

| Evaluation Questions | Data Source | Baseline Assessment | Project Assessment Cycle |
|--|---|---------------------|--|
| Level 1 Outcomes | | | |
| Does targeted training increase involvement of non-college-bound students in school character initiatives? | Roster of Extracurricular Activities completed by student team members and controls | Spring 2007 | Spring 2008, 2009, 2010 |
| | Focus groups with student team members | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 2010 |
| | Teen LEAD Questionnaire completed by Cadre and Character Coaches and other school personnel | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 09, 10 |
| | Accountability Reports by Character Cadres | Not applicable | Annual fall, spring report cycles |
| Does targeted training and involvement as leaders in school character initiatives enhance student character? | VIA-Youth by student team members and controls | Spring 2007 | Spring 2010 |
| | Student character trait questionnaire completed by parents of student team members and controls | Summer 2007 | Summer 2009 |
| | Student character trait questionnaire completed by Cadre Coaches | Summer 2007 | Summer 2009 |
| | Discipline referral data by quarterly attendance period for student team members and controls | 2006-07 school year | 2007-08, 08-09, 09-10 |
| Does targeted training and involvement as leaders in school character initiatives increase academic performance of non-college-bound students? | High School Assessment Program (HSAP) and HSAP-Alt (for disabled students) performance of student team members and controls | Fall 2007 | Spring 2008, 09, 10 Fall 2008, 09, 10 |
| | Graduation Rates for student team members and controls from school records | Not Applicable | Spring 2010 |
| | Post-graduation plans from EEDA reports for student team members and controls | 2006-07 School Year | 2009-10 School Year |
| Does targeted training and involvement as leaders in school character initiatives enhance workplace success among non-college-bound students? | Student job history and satisfaction survey completed by student team members and controls | Spring 2007 | Spring 2008, 09, 10 |
| | Student character traits questionnaire completed by parents of student team members and controls | Summer 2007 | Summer 2009 |
| | Student character traits questionnaire by Cadre Coaches | Summer 2007 | Summer 2009 |

| Evaluation Questions | Data Source | Baseline Assessment | Project Assessment Cycle |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Does specialized training for school personnel increase their efforts to address the character development of students? | Teen LEAD Questionnaire completed by Character Cadres, Cadre Coaches, and other school personnel | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 09, 10 |
| | Focus group with Cadre Coaches | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 2010 |
| Does specialized training and serving as Cadre Coaches for non-college-bound student leaders raise Cadre Coaches' expectations of such students? | Teen LEAD Questionnaire completed by Character Cadres, Cadre Coaches, and other school personnel | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 09, 10 |
| | Focus group with Cadre Coaches | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 2010 |
| Level 2 Outcomes | | | |
| Does student leadership enhance character development initiatives in schools? | EPS completed by faculty/staff in intervention and control/comparison sites | Fall 2007 | Fall 2009 |
| | EPS completed by members of the school character development advisory team | Fall 2007 | Fall 2009 |
| | Character Development Rubric Scores and Rating on the Annual School Report Card | Summer 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 | Summer 2008, 2009, 2010 |
| Do student-led character development initiatives have a positive impact on school climate? | Focus groups with samples of high school students in intervention and control/comparison schools | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 2010 |
| | Focus groups with samples of school personnel in intervention and control/comparison schools | Not applicable | Spring 2008, 2010 |
| | Annual rates of suspension and expulsion for violent/criminal offenses from School Report Cards | Time series beginning with 2001-02 school year | Annual updates |
| Do student-led character development initiatives have a positive impact on schoolwide academic performance? | Annual dropout and graduation rates on School Report Cards | Time series starting 2001-02 year | Annual updates |
| | HSAP performance | 2006-2007 School year | 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 |

An Access database will be developed to facilitate data collection and storage and report generation for project indicators at the district and school level. The evaluators will use SPSS for survey data management and quantitative data analyses and Atlas TI or a similar software package for analyses of focus group results and other qualitative indicators. The evaluators have expertise conducting focus groups and have found them particularly valuable with other grant projects (Paget and Blume, 2001). Members of the Character Cadres and their Cadre Coaches will be expected to assist in the implementation of the focus groups.

Numerous record-keeping forms and procedures will contribute to process accountability. Data about the characteristics and attendance of training participants will be collected from registration materials and stored in an Access database designed for that purpose. The training database will be one of only two data sources containing identifying information about participants as it will serve as the master file of Teen LEAD training records and participant contact information for the SDE. Accountability reports submitted by the Character Cadres also will contain identifying information. To protect the confidentiality of training participants the training database will not be linked to other evaluation data that will be tracked using identification numbers assigned by school personnel.

Members of the pilot year student teams will assist in the development of templates for Teen LEAD accountability reporting. All teams participating in Teen LEAD training will be required to submit accountability reporting in the year following the training and in any year a team receives project funding from the SDE. The evaluators will also develop (with input from colleagues, members of SCCDP, and those individuals who will complete the forms such as school personnel, students, and parents) other forms required to monitor implementation progress.

Feedback and Assessment of Progress

Formal reports on implementation progress, program fidelity, and program quality will be provided semi-annually to the SCCDP, the SDE, Character Cadres, school advisory teams, and other pertinent partners so these groups will know how the project is progressing and be able to respond with prudent mid-course corrections. Such feedback will provide a valuable quality control function for data collection. Routine reports following each outcome measurement assessment cycle also will be provided to appropriate constituents.

The model applied in evaluating the Teen LEAD training event and the annual project reunion/conference is based upon Kirkpatrick's (1994) four levels of evaluation for training programs: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The training division at The Center for Child and Family Studies has adopted the Kirkpatrick model. The model moves beyond simple assessment of event satisfaction (reaction level) to determining whether and how participants' knowledge and behavior change in response to training and, more importantly, if these changes positively impact the systems within which the training recipients operate. Reaction level data from the pilot training will be important as it will serve as a primary source of information for modifications to the training curricula.

Guidance about Effective Strategies for Replication

Formative and summative data from the evaluation will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Teen LEAD and to dissemination of a replicable, results-based model of youth-led character development. Disparate levels of implementation confound outcome assessment, and implementation fidelity supports replication studies. The fact that the character education initiative in South Carolina has been sustained since the initial funding in 1996 is a testament to the commitment among all involved and creates the foundation for success as we incorporate a

youth leadership component into the initiative. Given the innovative nature of Teen LEAD, special attention will be given to garnering the support needed to sustain the initiative. In the program evaluation literature, five factors have been linked to program sustainability (Scheirer, 2005), and the evaluators will ensure that these factors are addressed as we seek to build a long-term support base.

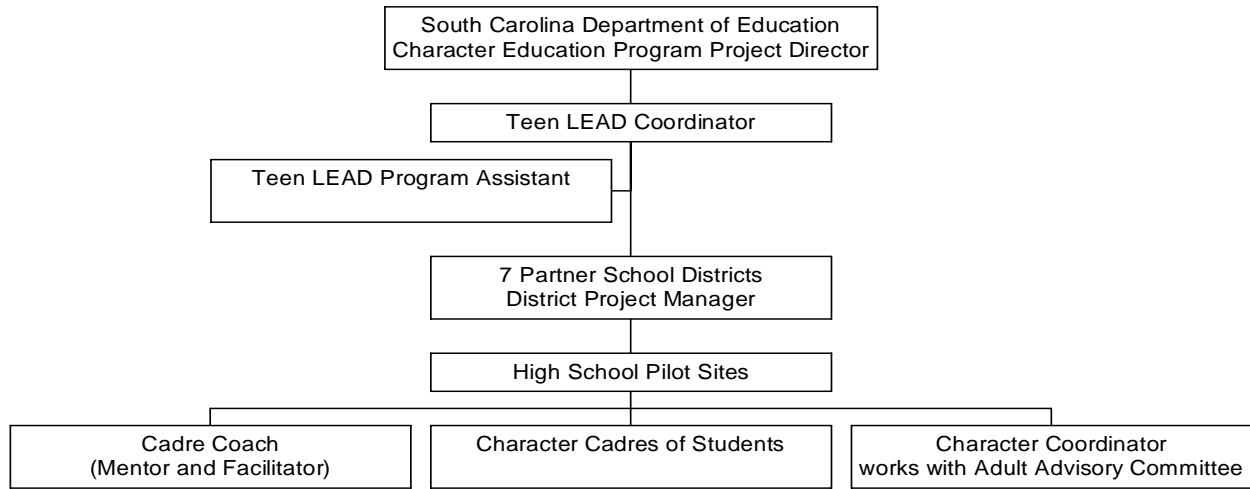
4. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Adequacy of the Management Plan

The goals, objectives, and activities for Teen LEAD directly reflect the Partnerships in Character Education Grant Program's purpose. The breadth and depth of our existing infrastructure, coupled with the range of qualifications represented among our project staff, evaluators, and collaborating partners, reflect our capacity to successfully accomplish the challenges ahead—on time and within budget. Youth can make a difference, and Teen LEAD will demonstrate that when youth have a significant voice in creating and implementing character development efforts, they accomplish much more.

Figure A illustrates the placement of Teen LEAD staff (SDE, district, school), but is not meant to imply a hierarchical structure. All district and school positions will be provided with stipends, primarily to existing staff, because the intent is to create an infrastructure that facilitates and supports the youth-led initiatives of the character cadres.

Figure A. Teen LEAD Management Structure



Goal 1: To develop groups of student leaders (character cadres) who as members of the project’s partnership will direct character development initiatives in their schools and communities that will be integrated into classroom instruction, are consistent with state academic content standards, and can be conducted in conjunction with other education reform efforts.

Objective 1.1: The project partners will develop the Teen LEAD curriculum by December 2007.

At the beginning of Year One, Joan Dickinson, Project Director, will convene an ad hoc Curriculum Review Committee that will provide guidance to the curriculum development process. Pam Arden, YLI Director of Curriculum Development, will oversee the development of the curriculum and will deliver the curriculum for the first year’s training by April 2007. The Committee will review the evaluation data and suggest curriculum revisions, and Dr. Arden will then deliver the revised, final curriculum by December 2007.

Objective 1.2: The YLI will deliver Teen LEAD training to 10, six-student teams and their adult sponsors (cadre coaches) during Year One.

Early in Year One, Ms. Dickinson and staff at the State Department of Education (SDE)

will hire a Teen LEAD coordinator and establish contractual relationships with the partner districts. Each partner district will designate or hire a district project manager by January 2007.

In the fall 2006, Ms. Dickinson and the evaluators will conduct orientation meetings for appropriate district and school personnel in each partner district. During this phase, each participating school's principal will designate the school's character coordinator and the school's cadre coach. Ms. Dickinson and the evaluators will conduct project and evaluation orientation for district project managers by January 2007.

Beginning in February 2007, the project managers, character coordinators, and cadre coaches will use the selection criteria to solicit nominations for student team members. After the nominations have been made, the Teen LEAD coordinator and the evaluators will conduct project/evaluation orientation sessions in each partner district for parents of students nominated to participate in the pilot training. The evaluators will conduct the sampling procedures to assign students to the intervention or control group, and the Teen LEAD Coordinator will then conduct registration for the pilot training. Dr. Ardern will recruit and train staff for the pilot training before the end of June 2007. Each cadre coach will conduct a pre-event team meeting before the end of June.

The Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) will conduct Teen LEAD training in July 2007 for 10 student teams and their cadre coaches. The teams and coaches will then conduct post-event planning sessions before school begins and return to school with a plan to enlist fellow students in developing a character cadre to implement character development projects throughout the upcoming and subsequent school years. The character cadres they form will be required to submit accountability reports in October and May each year.

Objective 1.3: The YLI will train 20 student teams and their coaches each year in Years

Two, Three, and Four.

During January through March of those years, the Teen LEAD Coordinator will conduct registration for training, and Ms. Ardern will recruit and train staff for the training events.

During that time, each school's principal will identify a school character coordinator and designate a cadre coach for each proposed team. Each school's character coordinator and cadre coach will use the selection criteria to identify student team members. Prior to the July training session, the cadre coaches will conduct pre-event team/parent orientation meetings.

In July each year, the YLI will conduct two Teen LEAD training events, each for 10 student teams. Before school begins each year, the teams and their coaches will conduct post-event planning sessions. The teams will form character cadres and continually plan and implement projects during the school year. Mandatory accountability reports will be due in October and June following participation in summer Teen LEAD training.

Goal 2: To provide technical assistance and financial support to character cadres in the development, implementation, and evaluation of their programs so that their school-based initiatives follow best practice guidelines, use research-based programs, and have a diverse base of support.

Objective 2.1: The SCCDP will provide research-based best practice guidelines to the cadres and to school character education advisory teams on identifying, implementing, and evaluating character education initiatives.

To accomplish this objective, Ms. Dickinson and members of the SCCDP will, during the first six months of Year One, formalize the SDE's best practice guidelines for character initiatives for mass distribution, and will develop or adopt guidelines for curricula review by the end of that grant year. Continually during all years of the project, they will publicize the SDE's

Character Education Web site on all print materials and communications and use the website to efficiently disseminate resource materials, reports, and evaluation results.

Objective 2.2: Throughout all four years of the grant, the SCCDP will ensure a diverse base of input and support for youth-led initiatives from adults within and outside schools.

To begin this process, within the first six months of Year One, each participating principal and character coordinator will identify a faculty/administrator/counselor team to attend the Teachers Academy in June. The principal and coordinator also will establish a school Character Education Advisory Team (if one does not already exist). Beginning in Year Two and continuing to the end of the grant term, the advisory team will coordinate the school's character education initiative and provide oversight for the character cadres. In the fall and summer of each year (Years Two–Four), Ms. Dickinson, the Teen LEAD Coordinator, and the SCCDP will review Teen LEAD management plans and implementation reports and provide feedback to character cadres regarding their submissions.

Objective 2.3: The SCCDP will develop an accountability system to monitor the character cadres' planning and implementation activities.

During the summer of Year One, the SCCDP, the evaluators, and the Teen LEAD coordinator will develop guidelines and procedures for accountability reporting. Following the pilot training, the evaluators will engage the student teams from the pilot training to develop accountability reporting templates, which they will use for their fall planning and spring implementation accountability reports. The SCCDP, the evaluators, and the Teen LEAD coordinator will review the model templates and adopt/adapt a permanent set of templates for annual Teen LEAD accountability reporting.

Objective 2.4: The project partners will establish a mini-grants program to provide

funding to 10 cadres in Year Two and 30 cadres each subsequent year.

To begin this process in the spring and summer of Year One, the SCCDP, the Teen LEAD coordinator, and the evaluators will develop guidelines, procedures, application forms, and accountability reports for the mini-grant program. In the fall of Years Two–Four, the Teen LEAD coordinator will solicit applications for the mini-grants and convene an ad hoc committee to review mini-grant applications. The review committee will review the applications and award mini-grants no later than December of each year. The character cadres will be responsible for the implementation of the mini-grant projects, and for submitting expenditure, implementation, and evaluation reports in May of each year. Mini-grant reports will be reviewed by the SCCDP, and the SCCDP will provide feedback to the cadres.

Objective 2.5: The project partners will provide opportunities for communication and collaboration among character cadres.

To facilitate this objective, Ms. Dickinson and the Teen LEAD coordinator will establish an ad hoc conference planning committee each year of the grant. Together, the committee and the conference planner will plan a joint annual spring conference and Teen LEAD reunion, the first to be held in March 2008. During the summer of Year One, the Teen LEAD coordinator will establish an ad hoc technology committee, and that committee will develop a Teen LEAD Web page and listserv by the fall of Year Two.

Goal 3: To implement an evaluation plan consistent with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements and the invitational priority for rigorous, scientifically based research that will inform project improvement and contribute to the broader knowledge base on youth-led initiatives.

Objective 3.1: The evaluators will conduct a rigorous evaluation, designed to meet the

GPRA requirements and invitational priority for PCEP. (See Project Evaluation Section)

Objective 3.2: The project director and evaluators will provide timely reports for project improvement, accountability, and sustainability.

In the fall each year (starting Year Two), the Project Director and the Teen LEAD Coordinator will prepare and submit the required annual progress reports to the U.S. Department of Education (USED). At the midpoint and conclusion of the project, the evaluators will prepare and submit the required evaluation reports to the USED. Throughout the project, the evaluators, Ms. Dickinson, and the Teen LEAD coordinator will prepare and distribute reports. The data will be analyzed and used to make adjustments to support continuous project improvement. Evidence of success will be used to promote sustainability beyond the funding period.

The project director and evaluators will communicate evaluation results to the SDE staff managing implementation of EEDA to ensure collaboration on our mutual goals to improve student performance and success in the workplace.

Diversity of Perspectives

The success of Teen LEAD hinges on a diversity of perspectives. As the activities previously described show, an important element of Teen LEAD is to both consult with and inspire participation of all who are impacted by the initiative. Our plan incorporates input from students, school personnel, parents, and other community members both in design and implementation.

First and foremost, the target population of non-college bound students is itself somewhat non-traditional for leadership training. Our selection criteria and nomination guidelines will ensure that the students who attend the training are representative of the student bodies they represent, particularly under-served groups such as disabled students and racial and ethnic

minorities. Second, we will engage parents, school personnel, and the broader community to support the initiative and to adopt an empowering, rather than authoritarian role, while doing so.

South Carolina was fortunate to be among one of the early cohorts of states receiving funding for character education infrastructure development from the USED in September 1996. An important outgrowth of that period was the formation of the SCCDP. In addition to their advisory role, members of the SCCDP are actively involved in a range of activities in support of our initiative from resource sharing among colleagues to community presentations to evaluation data collection.

The SCCDP's membership represents several Communities of Character, City Year of Columbia (a youth service organization), JROTC, National Beta Club, the South Carolina Bar Association, and various businesses, as well as schools and districts from across the state. The diversity of the SCCDP models the expectation for local advisory groups.

The SCCDP prides itself on its representative composition, and all of the ad hoc committees needed to advise and manage Teen LEAD will seek diverse, representative membership, including students. Finally, our evaluators are recognized for their empowering approach and the value they place on the input of their peers and constituents.

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